

# Foreword

We all know that the best way to avoid dangerous working conditions is to engineer them out of the workplace or to establish rules that keep employees from committing risky job practices. But sometimes, there is simply no way for a worker to avoid spending time in a dangerous atmosphere, doing a job in a loud environment, or being exposed to other conditions that could cause an occupational injury or illness.

Those are the times when a worker must depend on personal protective equipment to protect his or her health. This guide explains how to determine what PPE is needed in a typical workplace and then looks at many different types of equipment.

In North Carolina, the N.C. Department of Labor enforces the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act through a state plan approved by the U.S. Department of Labor. NCDOL offers many educational programs to the public and produces publications to help inform people about their rights and responsibilities regarding occupational safety and health.

When reading this guide, please remember the mission of the N.C. Department of Labor is greater than just regulatory enforcement. An equally important goal is to help citizens find ways to create safe workplaces. Everyone profits when managers and employees work together for safety. This booklet, like the other educational materials produced by the N.C. Department of Labor, can help.

Cherie Berry  
Commissioner of Labor